

The Gospel of Grace by Faith, not the Law: *Paul Rebukes Peter*

Galatians 2:11-14 / July 23, 2022

Introduction: Galatians in its Historical Context of the First Missionary Journey

Antioch of Pisidia, the first city in Galatia, receives the Gospel to the Gentiles

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”” And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. (Acts 13:44-48, ESV)

Antioch of Syria hears of the Gospel to the Gentiles

Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples. (Acts 14:24-28, ESV)

Paul writes the letter to the four churches in Galatia

Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: (Galatians 1:1-2, ESV)

Summary of Galatians 2: The Apostles Ratify the Gospel of Grace to Paul 2:1-14

1. Paul Goes to Jerusalem by God’s Call to Privately Explain the Gospel to the Gentiles to the Apostles (2:1-2)
2. Paul Chooses Not to Circumcise Titus as a Sign of the Gospel to the Gentiles (2:3-5)
3. Paul Receives Fully the Apostles’ Recognition of God’s Authority of the Gospel to the Gentiles (2:6-9)
4. Paul Accepts the Apostles Invitation for the Gentile Churches to Help the Poor in Jerusalem (2:10)

5. Paul Publicly Rebukes Peter and Substantiates Paul’s Authority of the Gospel of Grace 2:11-14

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; (2:11-12a, ESV)

Peter’s Conversion to the Gospel of Grace for the Gentiles

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

Divine Vision: *The Voice of God Declares to Peter to Eat Unclean Food*

(11:4-10)

But Peter began and explained it to them in order: “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air.

And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’

But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’

This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven.

Divine Command: *The Spirit Calls Peter to Go With Gentiles to Enter a Roman Centurion's Home* (11:11-12)

And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

Divine Preparation: *An Angel Appears to Cornelius to Send for Peter* (11:13-14)

And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

Divine Action: *The Holy Spirit Is Received by the Gentiles as it was with the Jews* (11:15-18)

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard these things they fell silent.

And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:1-18, ESV)

but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. (2:2:12b, ESV)

THE LAW OF MOSES: Approval and Prohibition of Food

1. Approval of Eating Animals

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat.

2. Prohibition of Eating Animals

Nevertheless, among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. And the rock badger, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. And the hare, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. And the pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

3. Approval of Eating Fish

"These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat.

4. Prohibition of Eating Fish

But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you. You shall regard them as detestable; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. Everything in the waters that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.

5. Prohibition of Eating Birds

"And these you shall detest among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are detestable: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, the kite, the falcon of any kind, every raven of any kind, the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind, the little owl, the cormorant, the short-eared owl, the barn owl, the tawny owl, the carrion vulture, the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

THESIS: The Holiness of God

For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. **You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.** This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, **to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean** and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten. (Leviticus 11:1-47, ESV)

And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. (2:13, ESV)

The Impact of Peter's Hypocrisy: Barnabas Witnesses the Gospel to the Gentiles

1. Barnabas Encourages the Gentiles Who Had Received the Gospel in Antioch

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent **Barnabas** to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

2. Barnabas Brings Paul to Antioch to Teach the Gentiles

So **Barnabas** went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

3. Barnabas and Paul Send Financial Support to the Jewish Christians from the Gentile Christians

Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of **Barnabas** and Saul. (Acts 11:19-30, ESV)

But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (2:14, ESV)

Justification by Faith: The Heart of the Book of Galatians

1. Transition to Paul's Initial Teaching on Justification by Faith in Christ, not by Works in the Law

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:15-16, ESV)

2. Paul's Explanation of Justification by Faith Destroys Racial, Social, and Gender Divisions

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, or in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:23-29, ESV)

3. The Problem: Galatians Return to Justification by Works from Justification from Faith

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? (Galatians 5:4-7, ESV)

4. The Problem Continues: Paul Defends Justification by Faith at the Jerusalem Council

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.

But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses." (Acts 15:1-5, ESV)